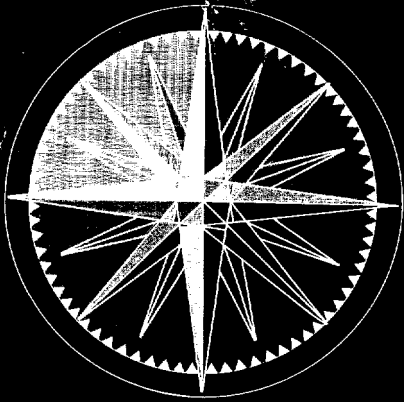


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SPECIAL REPORT

NEW SOUTH AFRICAN BID FOR WESTERN SUPPORT

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NEW SOUTH AFRICAN BID FOR WESTERN SUPPORT

A series of recent speeches by South African Prime Minister Verwoerd has provided his government's considered reaction to outside pressures which have built up sharply since last March. He sought both to restate the government's policy on separation of the races (apartheid) and to reassure the whites--his fellow Afrikaners in particular--that its determination to resist African pressure is undiminished despite the tough UN Security Council resolution of 7 August. At the same time, he also put out feelers which, taken in conjunction with private statements by influential whites, suggest that he is hunting for a way to reach some accommodation with his most powerful Western critics--the US and Britain.

The Speeches

The speeches began within two weeks of the Security Council resolution, which urged a ban on arms shipments to South Africa and was passed unanimously, except for abstentions by the French and British delegates (the latter, like the US, nevertheless made a strong statement condemning South African racial policy). Verwoerd spoke first at a rally of his Nationalist Party in a hard-core Afrikaner area in the Orange Free State; then twice in Durban, stronghold of the opposition United Party; and finally on 3 September in Pretoria at the annual congress of the Nationalists' Transvaal section.

The impression conveyed is one of

little change. The speeches were full of the bromides which the prime minister has long used to keep up the morale of the white South Africans: that apartheid will succeed if the whites will stick together, that understanding among Western nations for South Africa's racial approach is steadily increasing, but that the country is willing to stand against the whole world rather than compromise its policy and has the economic and military means to do so. Verwoerd also criticized two deviationist trends within Afrikanerdom: the exploration by Afrikaner liberals in Cape Province of the possibilities of partitioning the whole country into black and white units of roughly equal size, and the rise of multi-racial tendencies in



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the powerful Dutch Reformed Church of Verwoerd's own Transvaal Province.

The net effect is to suggest that implementation of apartheid may be stepped up--i.e., that tribal African areas will be given progressively greater amounts of real but carefully circumscribed autonomy, while African migration to white areas will be discouraged and, if economically feasible, reversed. The amount of land allocated to the tribal "Bantustans" may even be increased somewhat. Verwoerd clearly has no intention of changing apartheid theory radically, either by moving forward toward partition or backward toward establishment of a multiracial society.

Bid to the West

It is in this context that Verwoerd put forth his feelers to the US and Britain. In his 27 August speech at Durban, he stated that if the UK and the US had any suggestions for concessions which might be made by South Africa and if his government accepted these suggestions, the two countries should be willing to "stand by South Africa through thick and thin." Otherwise, he said, one concession would lead to another and white South Africa would be swamped. This statement is clearly a "gambit" to which Verwoerd expects a reply, although according to one press version of the speech, the prime minister added that he

could not see the US and Britain making such a guarantee.

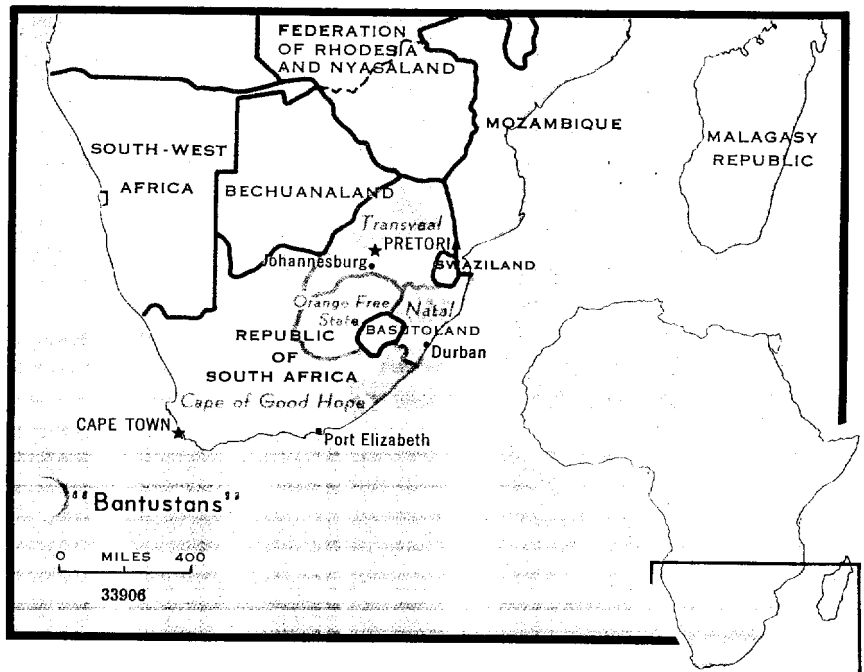
At Pretoria a week later Verwoerd became a little more explicit. In this speech he proposed--"and it is almost a challenge"--that Britain allow the inhabitants of its three High Commission Territories (Basutoland, Bechuanaland, and Swaziland) to choose between continuing as British dependencies and becoming part of a "greater South Africa" under the "Bantustan" concept. This proposal resuscitated a South African desire which had been officially dormant for some time. It was clearly a propaganda maneuver, since Verwoerd made it without telling the British beforehand. It has no chance of acceptance, since British public opinion and many leading Africans in the territories oppose it.

Verwoerd's proposal nevertheless points up the difficulties Britain faces in these backward territories, all of them economically dependent to some degree on South Africa. Britain is committed to advance these territories toward self-government, but their further political development in practice requires Verwoerd's acquiescence. He could, for instance, disrupt Basutoland's political and economic fabric by repatriating relatively small numbers of Basuto tribesmen from South Africa. British officials admit that they see no way out of this dilemma.

SECRET**Verwoerd's Balancing Act**

Verwoerd's government has clearly been disconcerted by the evidence of its isolation in the past few months. British and American pressure has probably helped to impress the South Africans with the extent to which their country is an international outcast, especially after the two countries made strong demarches on the South-West Africa issue last March. The force of British and American influence, and the value of British and American investment capital, are appreciated. Even a partial detente with the two Western powers would relieve pressure from some other countries. For this reason Verwoerd apparently has decided to see how much give there is in the US-British position.

Verwoerd's greatest pre-occupation, however, is on another front. He was undoubtedly sincere when he told his audience in Durban that white unity was the first prerequisite for white survival. With African nationalist movements largely squashed at the moment, with the South African economy booming, and with his own position in the country never more secure, a deterioration in white morale and vigilance is in fact the most serious danger the government has to face over the near term; and it is white morale which is most vulnerable to



criticism from nations such as Britain and the US having close historical and cultural ties with South Africa. This is nothing new: Verwoerd, the architect and most persuasive exponent of apartheid, has always spent much of his time reassuring the Afrikaner faithful and trying to wean the country's English-speaking whites away from their alleged overseas allegiances.

Recent American and British criticism, and perhaps also the violent scenes staged by the Africans at recent international meetings, have led Verwoerd to step up these efforts. This is a plausible reason why he delivered the two most important of his four speeches in English-speaking Durban--where he received a hero's welcome. It would also explain why he

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explicitly assured his audiences there that his government has no sympathy with the liberal Afrikaners' partition schemes, most of which would put English-speaking Natal Province--of which Durban is the capital--in the African part of the country. His reassurances are even going so far nowadays as to accuse the Western world of cultural decadence, from which it is to be rescued by a young and vigorous South Africa.

At the same time Verwoerd must be adept enough at political sleight of hand to mollify opposing schools of thought within the ranks of his own Afrikaner people. Most Afrikaners who have dealt extensively with racial issues believe that more must be done, whether through partition of the country or simply through faster implementation of traditional apartheid. On the other hand, the farmers and the lower-class urban Afrikaners, the backbone of the Nationalist Party's voting strength, tend to think that Verwoerd is already "doing too much for the Kaffirs" and look back to the old days when white supremacy was a much less complicated thing.

Verwoerd is a past master at maintaining Afrikaner unity by moderating criticism from either side. At the same time he must gloss over the facts that the economics of apartheid are questionable, to say the least, and that even the political aspects of his program are running into opposition from tribal Africans in the reserves.

Assertions of cultural superiority, appeals to white courage and determination, and "challenges" to Britain all help to distract attention from these difficulties and give an illusion of more progress than actually has occurred.

Need for Unity

Verwoerd probably believes that he has several years to try to work out a solution to South Africa's racial dilemma, but only if the whites maintain their unity and determination. He therefore seems likely to protect and encourage this unity above all else. A reversal of field on his part might well disconcert the whites and undermine their morale; hence his recent emphasis to his followers (and presumably to listeners elsewhere in the world) on the inviolability of apartheid doctrine.

However, his task would be made much easier if he could get even a little protection from the US and Britain--if, for instance, their public condemnation of him was a little less severe, or if he could get their private assurances of support at the World Bank for an application for a loan to develop the "Bantustans." If he could attain such an aim without jeopardizing the more important goal of white unity, he probably would be happy to do so. This outlook seems likely to govern any future exploratory talks between the South African and Western governments. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM)

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